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### THE RESIDUE OF CHARM

("The Poets of the Future," A College Anthology for 1916-17—Henry T. Schnittkind, Ph. D.—Stratford Co., Boston, Mass., Publishers.)

The College Anthology for 1916-17 is a gathering of one hundred and sixty-five poems from a total of several thousand submitted by several hundred colleges and universities. The collection represents eighty-two sources with an appendix of honorable mention which brings the institutions named to approximately one hundred.

The anthologist says that he selected the poems because he liked them. If others fail to see what he has seen it is because their "emotional glasses are adjusted differently." Such a test is genuine in the ordinary mechanics of competition when the poem is submitted as an isolated unit, but may not apply to the printed text where name of author and college are attached. Possibly the sex of the author, surely the name of the institution influences liking. That the poem comes from the University of Chicago or from Wellesley College gives it personality, color, interpretation, background; influences conscious and sub-conscious affect the psychology of choice. Readers of the book at this juncture, therefore, have none but a prejudiced alternative.

Where do the poets come from? Not necessarily from the instruction of professors conspicuous in contemporary literature. Princeton professors have furnished distinguished examples of literary style, but there are no notable contributions from Princeton University. The more mature and genuinely gifted poets seem to come from Wellesley, Mount Holyoke, Harvard, Columbia, Chicago, the University of Wisconsin and the University of California. Manifestly these are not localities providing exclusively the constituents of youthful poetry. They may therefore be localities where the training in English preliminary to the writing of poetry is discriminating and arduous. Unhappy is the college which in these days cannot boast

at least one three hour course in contemporary poetry with its twin course in contemporary drama. There is assuredly a general stimulus of interest and appreciation, but the long and severe training in technique, the wide familiarity with material, the power of craftsmanship are not afforded by all departments of English. The facilities for producing producers are often meagre. The department may lay greatest stress on the methodology side of preparing teachers of English. The tendency may be toward criticism rather than toward application. There may not be the machinery which gets poems into circulation.

Harvard University is represented by ten poems, the largest number from any single source. Many institutions appear only once or twice: Agnes Scott, Albright, Amherst, Beloit, Bowdoin, Coe, Goucher, Hamilton, Hampden-Sidney, Holy Cross, Illinois, Jackson, Lake Erie, Lawrence, Lombard and Wesleyan. Claremont, Dickinson, Converse, Dakota Wesleyan, Franklin and Marshall, Oberlin, Grinnell, Simmons, Bryn Mawr and the agricultural colleges of Utah, Mississippi and Massachusetts have to be content with honorable mention in the appendix. Yale University has only one poem in the collection, but it was written by the precocious Stephen Vincent Benet who has since published his first volume. Except for the Universities of Wisconsin, Cornell and California, there are very few representations from state sources. Dubuque College which claims uniqueness in its service to the foreign-born has two poems and Fisk University for Negro students has one.

Youth is not the period of self-expression in sustained effort. None of the poems are long. They show flashes of imagination, visual quality, temperament. Witness the Wellesley poem about the moon:

"The Moon's a specter pirate ship,  
Upon an inky sea;  
The shreds of mist her tattered flag;  
The clouds her canvas be.  
And ducats, silver ducats,  
A myriad shower of these  
She's thrown them o'er to light the craft;  
They've silvered all the trees.

Some of them are fantasies which the author had not patience to follow to the conclusion; for example, one which

begins as delightfully as "Late Summer's Night" from Wilson College:

"The cotton clouds float out like seeds  
From the sky's open milk-weed pod;  
Then late across the vast grey meads  
Stretch star-like sprays of golden-rod."

The French influence shows in vignettes sketched with light and graceful touch and in such small and polished trifles brodered together in colors as "Chinoiserie" from Barnard College:

"A cloud of shivering silver;  
The aspen in the wind.  
Gold-foil, the river leaping under sun.  
The moth-moon shyly showing, on slender jade empearled;  
The sky is a glowing poppy, all unfurled."

As befits post-adolescence, these poems are personal and subjective. They are ingenuous; the poet likes to talk about his first philosophy after he goes to the trouble of getting it. In fact, philosophy is one of the larger classifications into which the subject matter naturally falls, together with such classifications as love, war, nature, death and allegory, with a few poems of music, friendship, prayer, song and the fairies, one for the aeroplane, two for Christmas and two for democracy. There are no poems of full-throated jubilation, almost none of ideas and objective analysis. "To Joseph Royce" is an exception:

"Seaward he set his course, nor hugged the shore  
Of circumstance, resolv'd, dauntless, to sound  
The deep unfathomable seas, explore  
Alone far caverns measureless, profound,  
Seek that which lies below, beyond, behind  
The knower and the known, and when the West  
Salutes the stars with rose and gold, to find  
The foam-reefed Isles of Hesperus the Bless'd . . . ."

This is almost the only reference to classical mythology. Except for it and the letter "From John Keats to Fannie Brawne," there is little reference to the past. This is an anthology of the twentieth century.

Much of the music, however, is that made familiar in the last hundred years. The rhythm of Kipling is strong. There are gentle interlacings of Tennyson and there is an abrupt and swinging one by a boy of Leland Stanford who loves Brown-

ing. Of American poets, Whitman is conspicuous by his absence; there is a point of view which suggests Riley and even a flavor of Dunbar in a song from Washington University:

"O Moon, I reckon you mind that night  
When you was a-paintin' the bluffs wi' light  
An' she was settin' and singin' there  
While the night wind played through her yaller hair . . ."

The gentle Longfellow and the earnest Whittier have passed on and left no trace. Everyone has read Amy Lowell and has some acquaintance with Robert Frost and Edgar Lee Masters. Listen to the swish of water in this poem from Chicago University:

"Hear the swift slither  
Of rain in the gutters . . . .  
Or the sharp dither  
Of motor-car chains  
It rains . . . .  
  
From steel-shodden hoofs  
A too-hollow clangor  
Water hisses on roofs  
In over-filled drains  
It rains . . . .  
  
A wind-broken dray horse  
Lies dead by the curb-stone . . . ."  
With voice that is curse-hoarse  
The driver complains  
It rains . . . .  
  
Stark, ghosty-hued faces  
Sodden odored folk hurry  
None to the same places . . . .  
But all to their gains.  
It rains . . . ."

There are disciples of Witter Binner and echoes of the lyric quality of Sara Teasdale. For example, from Smith College:

**Little Dark Star**

(A French Peasant Girl's Song)  
Little dark star  
Smile on me  
Smile on me  
Most happily  
For I am now a bride to be,  
Little dark star.

Little dark star  
Weep with me  
Weep with me  
In sympathy . . . .  
My soldier's dead beyond the sea  
Little dark star.

Little dark star  
Peace to me  
Peace to me  
In a nunnery  
In prayer all day to Sainte Marie  
Little dark star.

The influence of Josephine Preston Peabody may well have fostered such a poem as "Prayer" by a student of Union College:

"Christ  
She is coming.  
Lead her gently into heaven.

Lord Israel  
Sing you the moon into a jewel for her,  
Make you the universe into her bed.  
God,  
Set you Lord Gabriel for a candle  
Shining at her head,  
And Lord Michael  
For a lamp before her feet.  
Mary,  
Smooth her gown,  
Sweetly as you  
As you would a child's.

Oh Christ,  
Hearkening unto prayers,  
Hear me,  
Praying desolate."

"In Canada" by a student of Lombard College has a dreary emptiness more original than its war philosophy:

"You are dead.  
Lilies nod in the prairie hay,  
The wandering woodbines beckon gay,  
The sky above is azure blue,

The sun gleams gold, as on the day that you  
 Enlisted. Then war meant  
 A cross of honor; and I sent  
 You gladly. You won the cross  
 And died. What is my loss?  
 Atrifling toll to the God of War  
 And Hate and Strife thrive as before,  
 And you are dead."

There are very few poems of the city or city life, except some fragments from students in New York and vicinity. There is very little dialect, the most interesting expression in that form being

**"Rime of the Cross'-cut Saw"**

(Michigan Agricultural College)

"I've often said, young fellow,  
 An' I always shall insist  
 If you've never pulled a cross-cut  
 There's a heap of fun you've missed.  
 If you've never mauled a timber-wedge,  
 An' hewed an oaken glut,  
 An' jerked a stump saw lively  
 When the kerf was saggin' shut,  
 An' blocked the notch with cobblestone  
 To make the timber jump  
 An' watched the giant waver  
 An' topple on the stump,  
 An' felt the woods just quiver  
 With the fervor of his fall,  
 And dodged the window-makers,  
 Why, your cup ain't full at all."

The gem of the book is probably a prize poem of 1913—  
 "Panama; Three Pictures," one of which follows:

"From out the sultry sky the great moon beams;  
 Below lie forest jungle fern and brake  
 Broad tangled stretches unassayed by man;  
 Great stagnant pools with fever-laden breath;  
 Untrodden ways where glide strange deadly snakes;  
 And giant trees, whereon, like errant souls  
 Shine ghostly orchids phosphorescent gleams.  
 A dead twig snaps; vast clouds of birds arise  
 From out the marshes' depth with screaming shrill.  
 The screaming fades; remains a heavy drone  
 Of countless insects, ministers of death  
 And heat, oppressive, dread, hangs over all."

This was written by a Harvard man whose name is still connected with the annual output of poetry. It suffers as do all the others from the fact that mere extracts are here used to symbolize the whole.

It is indisputable that the conspicuous defect of the volume is lack of workmanship. There is a painful use of adjectives. Ugly and bungling words are made to serve when patient search might have brought real illumination. Crashes of crudity mar the harmony. A charming fancy begins in inspiration, disintegrates in the middle, falls into chaos before the end. It is a comforting assumption that in the good old days, everything was thorough and carelessness was unknown. Every college could send out every man able to write the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. Now—the heirs of Diogenes wander through the infertile college fields and wander on the hilltops desolate.

The difference is in the compelling motive. These poems did not have to be written. They lack the pressure of necessity, the burden of responsibility. They cannot be measured by the measures which have evolved from old situations. They are recreation. They are the idle hour, the pleasure of choice, the golden fringe left when work was done. They are to be judged as the essence of delight that remained as the surplus after intellectual toil. The question then, is not of their metre nor even of their workmanship. The question is, Are they worthy as the residue of charm?

Lura Beam.

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### NOTES

Dr. Kelly delivered a series of six lectures at the Summer School of Southwestern University, Georgetown, Texas, on the general topic "The Minister and Christian Education" during the week of July 14.

During the week of July 14 President O. S. Davis, Chicago Theological Seminary, made a preliminary report of the theological seminary survey based upon the material found in the April issue of CHRISTIAN EDUCATION. About sixty theological seminary presidents attended this conference and expressed great interest in the preliminary report of the sur-